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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**  
**NEWS**

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NATIONAL  
OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC  
ADMINISTRATION

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** February 26, 2003

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**NOAA Seeks Comments on Ways to Restore Injured Coral and Seagrass**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will host two public scoping meetings to obtain input on proposed methods to restore or replace coral and seagrass habitat destroyed by incidents such as boat groundings or anchor damage.

NOAA is preparing programmatic environmental impact statements (PEIS) that describe methods and guidelines for coral and seagrass restoration projects in the Florida Keys and Flower Garden Banks (off the Texas coast) national marine sanctuaries. Preparing these statements will help speed preparation of environmental assessments and individual restoration plans for specific sites and contribute to faster restoration of injured coral and seagrass areas.

NOAA is also accepting written comments on the documents through April 15, 2003. NOAA expects to complete both the coral and seagrass environmental impact statements by March 2004.

**What:** Public scoping meetings on coral and seagrass restoration techniques

**When:** Thursday, March 6, 2003  
Afternoon meeting: 2:00 to 4:00 pm.  
Evening meeting: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

**Where:** Marathon Garden Club, 5270 Overseas Highway, gulfside.

**Contact:** Harriet Sopher, 301.713.3145, ext. 109 or  
harriet.sopher@noaa.gov.

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